

**Remarks
Ambassador Jim Zumwalt**

**Press Conference iho Launch of
Voice of America Frequency 102 FM**

**Café de Rome, Dakar
March 3, 2015**

(As prepared)

Dear invitees,

Thank you all for coming here today. This is a very exciting time for us -- the launch of the Voice of America's new frequency for listeners in Dakar 102 FM.

My sister is a journalist in the United States and so I have a lot of respect for the role of vibrant and free news media. Senegal's free press continues to play a vital role in building this country's democracy, and continues to contribute to an "Emerging Senegal."

Now we have an opportunity to add to the many voices on local airwaves. Several days after I arrived in Dakar, I attended a hip-hop concert at the Sorano Theater with American and Senegalese hip-hop artists. I saw firsthand the audience's incredible enthusiasm for their performance.

So I know that there is a great appreciation for American music and pop culture in Senegal! I invite all of you -- especially young Senegalese -- to listen to American hip-hop artists on 102 FM! Going forward, I look forward to hearing from our listeners about what they like on the frequency, and what they would like to add to the playlists.

With the addition of this radio station we hope to reach out to more Senegalese listeners. 102 FM will allow us to deepen the solid relationship between the people of Senegal and the people of the United States.

One thing that I would like to point out is that the Broadcasting Board of Governors is an autonomous U.S. government agency. It exists as a buffer to protect the VOA from political interference. The United States Government has no editorial oversight over VOA broadcasts whatsoever. When you listen to the Voice of America, you are listening to an independent news outlet.

Now, I would like to acknowledge our guests from the Broadcasting Board of Governors and the VOA. Bruce Sherman, who is Director of the Board's Office of Strategy and Development, came from Washington for this launch.

Thank you also to:

- Joyce Ngoh, Director of the Board's West and Central Africa Office,
- Idrissa Fall, broadcaster on VOA's French-to-Africa Service, who many of you have been listening to for years, and who you can hear now on 102 FM, and
- Ngathie Diop, the Regional Coordinator of the Voice of America's regional office here in Dakar

for being here today, and for their hard work in making this frequency a reality.

Thank you again for coming today. I'm really looking forward to listening to 102 FM, and hope that you will join us in enjoying the American music and features now available 24/7 in Dakar.